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OUTPOSTS

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J. C. HALL

Resurrection

HOW many, many times I died
When I was young! Each evening came
To quench my trembling torch of bliss
In sunset's huge millenial flame;
Till in the darkness of my room
I lay as still as in a tomb.

And yet this faith I took to bed:
That when the morning broke again,
My resurrected limbs would rise
As flowers at the touch of rain
And each new moment be reborn
Out of the world's abundant horn.

From birth to death, from death to birth—
This simple rhythm was my rule.
As bird and beast in sky and field
I clutched the present like a jewel
Against my heart and blessed it there
In glory of the earth and air.

I did not guess what since I've learned,
That there are wounds time cannot heal,
Lights that do mislead the morn,
Doubts that on the midnight steal
Like ghosts that seek, yet almost dread,
The resurrection of the dead.

I long to exorcise those shades
So long in Adam's bondage bound,
For where but in such liberty
Can Pity, Peace and Love be found?
They wait. One morning with the dews
They'll rise and tell the great good news.

JOHN HEWITT

O Country People

O COUNTRY people, you of the hill farms,
huddled so in darkness I cannot tell
whether the light across the glen is a star,
or the bright lamp spilling over the sill,
I would be neighbourly, would come to terms
with your existence, but you are so far;
there is a wide bog between us, a high wall.
I've tried to learn the smaller parts of speech
in your slow language, but my thoughts need more
flexible shapes to move in, if I am to reach
into the hearth's red heart across the half-door.

You are coarse to my sense, to my washed skin;
I shall maybe learn to wear dung on my heel
but the slow assurance, the unconscious discipline
informing your vocabulary of skill,
is beyond my mastery, who have followed a trade
three generations now, at counter and desk;
hand me a rake, and I, at once, betrayed,
will shed more sweat than is needed for the task.

If I could gear my mind to the year's round,
take season into season without a break,
instead of feeling my heart bound and rebound
because of the full moon or the first snowflake,
I should have gained something. Your secret is pace.
Already in your company I can keep step,
but alone, involved in a headlong race,
I never know the moment when to stop.

I know the level you accept me on,
like a strange bird observed about the house,
or sometimes seen out flying on the moss
that may tomorrow, or next week, be gone,
liable to return without warning
on a May afternoon and away in the morning.

But we are no part of your world, your way,
as a field or a tree is, or a spring well.
We are not held to you by the mesh of kin;

we must always take a step back to begin,
and there are many things you never tell
because we would not know the things you say.

I recognize the limits I can stretch;
even a lifetime among you should leave me strange,
for I could not change enough, and you will not change;
there'd still be levels neither'd ever reach.
And so I cannot ever hope to become,
for all my goodwill toward you, yours to me,
even a phrase or a story which will come
pat to the tongue, part of the tapestry
of apt response, at the appropriate time,
like a wise saw, a joke, an ancient rime
used when the last stack's topped at the day's end,
or when the last lint's carted round the bend.

CHARLES DURANTY

The Rebel

(*To Vivian of Sainte Agathe*)

HE spat a curse upon the empty air
And railed at God with words that fell to dust;
He snatched a rod from the blossoming hedge,
Walking the fields with his shadow of lust.

The seasons turned beneath a lolling sun,
Old men decayed in crooked oak-beamed rooms
But still he strode thick anger into clouds
That snaked about his head in tattered plumes,

Denying vision to his leaf-veined eyes.
He washed in rivers—cold as burning fire,
He slept in conflict, woke in bird-torn dawn
And crucified laughter with tongue of wire.

He encountered a girl with skin of bronze
And whispered, loneliness wears a black crest;
She smiled, rubbing pain from his fleshless limbs
And stifled his fears on her naked breast.

LOUIS JOHNSON

Judgment of Paris.

ANY may choose as badly or as well,
Having due regard for his human position
and likeness to error : no key will tell
the simplest solvent of any eternal question.

You may consider Troy—but that doesn't seem
to enter the matter—perhaps the reward—
an epic love—the woman of a dream—
will predetermine how you utter the word.

For there is no prize to bestow; only commitment
of the hand in a manner that would always
call for great tact or silence : but the diplomat
deserted you upon that fatal of all days.

And now the price for a while : living on borrowed
time—but with such fine fruits—these breasts
for whom the seas a hundred keels have harrowed :
you, for this one assertion, would suffer all time's defeats.

VERNON SCANNELL

The Unsuccessful Poet

PITY him, even at first when it might seem
That he is not unfortunate; and praise him too.
Puff into the bladder of his self-esteem
And do not underestimate his value :
It is he who demonstrates the hardness of the work
And warns you like a notice where the dangers lurk.

Yes, even when he seems to be happy and strong
Pity him, for like curls and waistlines such happiness
is doomed.

The first involuntary yelps that he calls song,
The moments of fragmentary vision and cosmic gloom,
The pinkish rhapsody that celebrates his first erection,
Do not condemn though they don't bear inspection.

For soon you'll see the branch of truth succumb
To the appalling dry-rot of ambition and then
Sad attempts to dress fashionably on no income;
And after this the first chancre of self-knowledge when
Mind flinches away from the numb and wintry page
And pen is parched before the barren acreage.

At the age of thirty or thereabouts when he says
That he is a victim of an evil age where all
Standards are debased, remember not to raise
Sceptical brows or blunt instruments; and above all
Do not judge when he goes quietly to his hovel
To put his head in the oven, or write a novel.

RICHARD KELL

Pigeon House Wall

THIS flaring afternoon I thought would give
me back the freedom torn away by nights
of sickness and regret; the mind's harbour
send out a whetted prow to split the blue-barked
water and the smooth-grained wind.
Here where the city opened to horizons
of sun-equipped adventure, with the black
spit of the last lean chimneys left behind,
my joy would climb the air as deft as seagulls
exulting in the cool and candid sky.

But somehow hope receded. Every stride,
and every gull huddled along the seawall,
flapping away at my approach, marked off
the blind retreat to loneliness. Already
a hostile squadron strafed the hills with rain,
the sun's defences crumbled. And arriving
at the city's last dead building, I felt
the horror of its silent isolation.
And knew that all I'd found was the despair
of being a world away from everything
except my own life's walled-off emptiness.

ARTHUR S. BOURINOT

Winter Sketch

WINTER owl skirts hemlock tree,
Unfurls his shadow on the snow,
A rabbit scurries frantically,
Pine grosbeaks busily come and go.

A partridge breaks his buried bed
And hurtles through the solitude
And then the silence of the dead
Is held within the listening wood.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

Four Cities

COUNTRY blood, and country bred,
To four cities my heart is fed.

For I was born by the city of London,
In a black abstraction of all that's human :
She is fog-crowned, but not bad-looking,
Consumed in the smoke of her own bad cooking.

Then Worcester, somnolent by Severn,
In a fine cathedral murmured of Heaven,
Where the last Dane's skin to the door is nailed,
And King John sleeps in a tomb that failed.

In the singing laurels, Oxford, the flirt—
Nine Muses twitching her skirt—
Lifted her hand in benediction,
But sent me forth with dereliction.

At Paris, in that graceful air,
The ghost of Guillaume Apollinaire
Met me, by the banks of Seine—
With the apostate Julian.

Undone by you, O London city,
Undone by you, and without pity?
By the British Museum I will grieve,
Where wisdom appeared to Soloviev.

MAURICE CONNOR

Roman Villa

HERE was a Roman Villa, under
These trees, these brambles : on the dark side
Mosses and primroses, over
The hedgerow, speedwell and wheat.
Roots and rabbit holes cover
The old courtyard
Under our feet.

Dig deep and you will find here
Beetles and spiders and worms,
The black soil and the blacker cinder
Which show the farm's
Final surrender
To ignorance, the usual terms
Of human blunder.

But remember these stones, they witness
Life was lived here,
Crops grown, men's happiness
Enjoyed and their
Enjoyment remembered. To us
They stand for a year
Or so of quietness and peace.

There is always the fire
But always the blanket of new earth and seeds,
Always the war
But always somewhere the living blood's
Delight, the brain's soar,
The hand that makes, the power
That remembers and builds.

JOCELYN BROOKE

The Leader

"**A**S you came from the Holy Land
In the dusk and the dim
Dayfall of dull November,
Did you meet the dark band
Of those hunters, or Him
Whom the men of the plains remember?"

"I come from the back of the hills—
The winter is long there :
Nothing was there to remember
But the seasonal ills;
The men are strong there,
Running on the hills in November."

"But riding down from the hills
By the woods and the sheep-paths,
Did you hear no sound of song there
By the ruined mills
Or the wrecked baths,
Of the men beleaguered so long there?"

"We passed by a camp at nightfall,
The guard spoke us fair :
The men there, he told us, were training
For what might fall
In the spring of the year,
Or perhaps at the next moon's waning."

"There will be War then. Can
You tell nothing more?
Did you take no note of their number,
Nor of what man
Is their leader in war?
Is there nothing more you remember?"

"A yokel we met in the woodlands
Spoke of a rider
Camped in the fields like a stranger,
Below in the good lands;
He thought him a leader,
And said that men feared his anger."

"Did he say no more of this stranger?"

"Men thought him a soldier,

A leader trained to command :

A cool-headed ranger,

No man bolder.

They fear his strength in that land."

"Ride back, boy, through the woodlands,
To the wrecked mills,

And carry these words to the stranger
In the good lands

Below the high hills;

You need have no fear of his anger.

Tell him we wait for a leader :

Our young men are keen

For a fight, and our old men remember
The champion rider,

The man who fought clean.

We are strong : we shall march in December."

PETER LEYLAND

A Submarine Dives in the Tuscarora Deep

AFTER the bombs, the green sea torn to white,
The steel hull wrenched and shuddering, the ship glides
Through the cool safety of that shadeless blue,
Deep-hidden, which daylong compasses the globe :
Yet mile by black mile lower sinks the abyss
Toward ice-cold ooze, ships crushed by the ocean's weight,
And rayless coasts with loftier precipices
Than high on Everest gleam, or Makalu.

Thus may a poet, when he penetrates
Beneath life's shallow turbulence, make his song
Out of some deeper interval of calm,
Yet never doubt that in profounder gulfs,
Beyond man's power to alter or explain,
Lies darkness, and the indeterminate deep.

KATHLEEN RAINÉ

The Buzzard

WHAT I desire
That is my labour,
My toil is to soar
On the current of air
That carries me over
Mountain and moor,
But I may never
Cross the great water
That breaks on the shore,
Fear tells me No.

My task is to scan
The ground and the green
For the small and the animate,
On them I fall,
Nor must I fail.
My work is to tear
My prey and devour.

The place that draws me
That is my Love.
To an ash-tree bower
Below the cliff-wall
I must carry
Sticks for my nest.
There must I lay them.
My joy compels me.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL

A Bull in February

FROST salted on fences and five-barred gates
binds us in winter's ecology. Two white goats
glare through the nursery saplings. The desolate copse
thrusts out an indelicate tongue, a black ellipse
over the arable. A sky full of probable snow
softens the ragged horizons. Warmth is taboo.

Day it is, you see, masculine, icily positive,
broken clean off from the dark, no longer inquisitive;
 bringing up living on parallel planes of feeling
 across time's truncations; battering the ailing
 into new apprehension; making the cyclists' flesh
 hard in the fresh light as the spun wheels flash.

Tense is the morning frost. The season's tense.
Fascination remains interred in nocturnal ease,
 hibernated, non-maternal, unequipped, and limited.
Another season lies, still inhibited,
 beyond this semi-circle, beyond the hens
 fidgetting and scratching under the rhododendrons.

There in the yard, where the cat leaps like a rhesus,
Noble, the bull, stands irritated, tied, and faces
 wall, wall, and wall; his elongated purse
 dangling full of worlds; his eyes webs of cares;
 sinister and dexter horns supporting his crest,
 waiting for spring, where his blood has already
 raced.

DEREK PARKER

Sonnets of Place: Bath

THEY keep up appearances, these elderly houses,
Sweeping noble in crescent and circle ;
They hold high roofs still higher
Although behind their prim façades
Their lathe and plaster hearts are broken.
In the rooms where Nash pirouetted
Landladies are stolidly making beds :
In the lounge where England's brilliance shone
Small gentlemen in blue serge are talking business.
And on the stones worn deeply by the feet
Of Roman bathers, queue the men and women
Who think that it is all rather dull,
And would much rather be having a beer
In the Thistle, or shopping at the Arcade.

LAWRENCE SPINGARN

A Long Lease

THERE is not anything that I can say
But grace, dear friend. To my bastille tonight
You come again with pardons, or delay;
Quick step outside the door, the panel light
Anticipating each foot of your way . . .
Winter is not like youth. How sad, how slow
The journey was, and lonely through the frost
Until you reached this house. I cannot show
Its better rooms because the keys were lost
By former tenants that I think you know . . .
But come, there shall be later altars lit
And meat and wine and music shall be all
Our sacrifice to time in spending it.
Your face is the same profile on the wall.
The shadow flies as if its wings were hit.
And afterwards . . . Kneel by the bed and pray
For strength of arms to carry such delight
To separate couches. And, in leaving, may
You shed a tear of pity for my plight
Who in that tear sees much of yesterday.

REVIEWS

Romantic Landscape : Paul Dehn (Hamish Hamilton, 7s. 6d.).

The Exiles : Henry Treece (Faber, 8s. 6d.).

An Acre of Land : R. S. Thomas (Montgomeryshire Printing Co., 3s. 6d.).

Poems in Pamphlet 1952 : IV, *Visions of Time*, Hal Summers, VI, *Poems 1950-51*, Michael Hamburger (Hand and Flower Press, 1s. each).

ALTHOUGH in his second volume, *Romantic Landscape*, Mr. Paul Dehn gives us another welcome dose of his special tonic for a dispirited age, the delightful impressionism with which he so effortlessly recreates the scenes that have stimulated his imagination—the Fern House at Kew, the Mourne Mountains, a barrage balloon drifting over Chelsea, London in summertime, etc.—and exults again in his remarkable command over colourful language, one puts his book down, after being held by it, with a vague sense of disappointment. It is not that there is any slackening of the creative impulse, or lack of the craftsmanship we have learned to expect from this poet. There is the same felicity of expression as before—

“My window lays its grid on the map of a sky
Charted with molten islands . . .”

“. . . green grapes bubbling on a barrow . . .”

“Where the fluted dustbins lie
Like broken pillars in the leaves.”

—the same capacity to see life freshly as if for the first time, the same mixture of music and vitality; yet when one compares these poems with those in Mr. Dehn's first book, *The Day's Alarm*, one cannot help but notice the difference in feeling. Apart from *The Sunken Cathedral* and the title-poem there is little to equal the emotional depths which characterized so many of the earlier poems, however light these may have seemed. Perhaps to compare the two collections in this way is to do Mr. Dehn an injustice, for more than half the later volume is devoted to a masque, *Call-Over* (written for the Fourth Centenary Celebrations of Shrewsbury School), which, with its witty dialogue and novel conception, is quite unlike anything in *The Day's Alarm*. On its own merits, *Romantic Landscape* is a thoroughly enjoyable volume, revealing

its author in a new light, and one which he may well employ to even greater advantage in a more significant medium.

Since Mr. Henry Treece discarded the early apocalyptic manner which kept him in the shadow of Dylan Thomas, the individual quality of his work has become more and more apparent. His sense of the dramatic is admirably brought out by such a theme as that which he has chosen for *The Tragedy of Tristram*, the long opening poem of his latest book. The Tristram and Iseult legend has been featured in poetry so often that only a genuine poet could give it the freshness and vigour needed to make it acceptable to readers today, but Mr. Treece passes the test with flying colours, in more senses than one :

“Where sun hangs coloured curtains in the sky
The great leviathan comes nosing south
Among the ice-floes, deep in sea-green dreams.
In tropic wilderness, the reptile slides
Through streaming undergrowth, and gaudy flowers
Shake with the scream of parrots. All goes its way,
Whether like black-backed gulls, in families
Riding upon the tides past lonely capes;
Or like the lizards basking in the sun
On some red-fissured rock, away from men :
All have their way, their purpose and their hope—
Save Tristram, who must walk the night in grief !”

The second section of his book comprises a number of poems on historical and mythological characters such as Jezebel, Dido, Ulysses, Hamlet, etc., and a third section groups the personal poems.

From *The Exiles* to *An Acre of Land* we pass from history and legend in general to history and legend in particular—that of the Welsh hill country; from the life of kings, queens and adventurers in the past as seen nostalgically from the present, to the life experienced by upland farmers and labourers in a present dominated by the past; from the romantic to the realistic, but a realistic which has its roots in a genuine love for the people, language and country of Wales. If Mr. R. S. Thomas does not flinch from the poverty, ugliness and lack of vision he perceives about him, neither does he allow them to blind him to the

“... kinship with the earth, where all is forgiven,
All is requited in the seasonal round
Of sun and rain, healing the year’s scars.”

The two pamphlet collections from The Hand and Flower Press are excellent value for money, the form and discipline of Hal Summers's work contrasting happily with the rich imagery and lyricism of Michael Hamburger's poetry. Both young poets show up well in this series and their pamphlets can be wholeheartedly recommended.

MORTIMER STEELE.

The Shaping Spirit : William Van O'Connor (Henry Regnery Co., U.S.A., \$2.75).

The Sorrows of Cold Stone : John Malcolm Brinnin (Dodd Mead & Co., \$3.00).

The Seven-League Crutches : Randall Jarrell (Harcourt Brace & Co., \$2.75).

Modern Poetry: American and British : edited by Kimon Friar and John Malcolm Brinnin (Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., \$4.00).

ENGLISH readers will be surprised to hear that, according to the blurb of *The Shaping Spirit*, "Wallace Stevens has come to be recognized as an American poet of a rank with Eliot," but the author of this penetrating critical study, Mr. William Van O'Connor makes no such claims for his subject. "My purpose . . ." he is content to say, "will be served if it makes Stevens's poetry understandable in a fuller and more coherent way . . ." Let it be said at once that he has succeeded not only in doing what he proposed, particularly in his treatment of Stevens's preoccupation with the relationship between imagination and reality, but also in making the subject of such vital interest that new readers will undoubtedly be drawn to the work of the poet in question. It is to be hoped that the publishers will arrange for the issue of an English edition of this volume, for Stevens's work is little known on this side of the Atlantic—to our misfortune.

Both Mr. Jarrell and Mr. Brinnin favour Freudian ideas and metaphysical themes, but these poets differ widely in their approach. While the former probes beneath the surface of his material and concentrates a powerful intellect upon it in an endeavour to achieve some kind of synthesis between the discoveries of psychology and anthropology, the latter is more concerned with language effects. In this respect Mr. Brinnin has affinities with Dylan Thomas. "For him ideas are the excuse for the poem rather

than the poem an excuse for the ideas," as his publishers rightly remark, and the results certainly justify the excuses, which cover a wide field of experience. Like Thomas, too, Mr. Brinnin makes extensive use of Christian symbols, if not in the orthodox manner, and has a Joycean delight in serious punning :

"No further, fathering logos, withering son,
Shall I my sense for want of grace confess,
But vouch this matter of decaying green
That with a shark's tooth grin
Hinges the roottree of my dwelling place."

Although Mr. Jarrell divides his work into three sections, *Europe*, *Children* and *Once Upon a Time*, the atmosphere remains curiously the same throughout the book, a slightly nightmare-ish, fairy-tale environment in which the skeletons in the cupboard are constantly in danger of being exposed, and in which buried memory wrestles with memory for attention :

"We should always have known. In this wood, on this Earth
Graves open, the dead are wondering :
In the end we wake from everything."

Because modern poetry has drawn very largely upon the Metaphysical and Symbolist traditions, Mr. Friar and Mr. Brinnin have given their anthology a bias towards the poetry which most clearly illustrates the metaphysical and symbolist trends today. So that while De La Mare is represented by three poems (by no means his best), Thomas Hardy by one, Edwin Muir by two, and poets like Edmund Blunden, Roy Campbell, Edward Thomas, Andrew Young and Siegfried Sassoon are completely excluded, several lesser poets appear to greater advantage. Pride of place is properly given to W. H. Auden, Hart Crane, Emily Dickinson, T. S. Eliot, Hopkins, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens and Dylan Thomas. Judging the collection as a whole, one might with justification say that the American contributions have been better chosen than the English; but omissions are to be found in the soundest of anthologies. These editors have, at least, been honest enough to state their basis of selection, so that dissenting readers can apply whatever correctives they deem necessary. For those unacquainted with recent developments in both English and American poetry this anthology will be of tremendous value, for the last 140 pages are devoted to an essay on *Myths and Metaphysics* and to critical and explanatory notes on many of the poems included.

CARLTON WILLIS.

Heroic Poetry : C. M. Bowra (Macmillan, 40s.).

TO APPRECIATE the formidable nature of the task Sir Maurice Bowra set himself in his latest volume, one has but to contemplate the extensive ground to be covered. Heroic poetry, says Sir Maurice, "may be divided into two classes, ancient and modern. To the first belong those poems which have by some whim of chance survived from the past. Such are the Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the Asiatic *Gilgamish*, preserved fragmentarily in Old Babylonian, Hittite, Assyrian, and New Babylonian, the remains of the Canaanite *Aghat* and *Keret*, the old German *Hildebrand*, the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, *Maldon*, *Brunanburgh*, and fragments of *Finnsburgh* and *Waldhere*, the Norse poems of the *Elder Edda* and other pieces, some French epics of which the most remarkable is the *Song of Roland*, and the Spanish *Poema del Cid* and fragments of other poems." The second class comprises the poems of the last 150 years, taken down from living bards, from Russia, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Greece, Estonia, Albania, parts of Asia, northern Siberia and Sumatra.

One is not surprised to hear that this volume of nearly 600 pages in which the author has made his own translations from Greek, French, Spanish, German, and Slavonic languages, is the result of work started twenty-five years ago and pursued intermittently since.

There is a tremendous amount of poetry in various languages which, though possessing heroic elements, cannot properly be classified as heroic poetry. Having determined the limits of his field of enquiry in the first chapter, Sir Maurice proceeds to deal with his material systematically and comprehensively. The main characteristics of heroic poetry—the specific qualities of the hero, the realistic background, the nature of the feats performed, the language in which the action is described, etc.—are carefully examined while the author moves easily from epic to epic to illustrate the points he is bringing out, and occasionally interrupting the development of his theme to make some interesting observation or to provide explanatory data.

Despite the immense learning involved in its making, and the erudition of its author, *Heroic Poetry* is a very readable book which will undoubtedly take its rightful place as the standard work on the subject.

ANTHONY NEWMAN.

- No Time for Cowards* : Phoebe Hesketh (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.).
The Modern Genilon : Dennis Williamson (Fortune Press, 6s.).
Metamorphoses of Violence : Douglas Newton
Godolphin and Other Poems : Bernard Bergonzi } Crescendo
Songs at High Noon : Guido Morris } Poetry Series,
 2s. 9d. each.

THE title of Mrs. Hesketh's new book is rather misleading, suggesting as it does a poetry consciously concerned with the contemporary world of recurrent crisis, written from the active centre of the battle. Her themes are essentially religious and optimistic ("The deeper the wound, the stronger the flower . . .") discovering good in evil and light in darkness with an ease that too often verges on the superficial. There is, nevertheless, a core of good poetry in her work that pleases the reader and makes him wish for more. Mrs. Hesketh has a profound understanding of the Northern countryside and it is in her nature poetry that her craftsmanship is unobtrusively successful. At her best she is capable of a lyrical simplicity that is rooted unmistakably in the Romantic tradition.

It would be to the ultimate advantage of Mr. Dennis Williamson if he could find time to read Mrs. Hesketh's poetry. In *The Modern Genilon* he is too frequently overwhelmed by the crudity and violence of the modern world; an inescapable circumstance that makes the poet's task almost impossible but that must be forced into perspective if he is to triumph. Liberation from negative attitudes apparent in many of these poems may bring to fruition a marked talent and an enviable gift for poetic concentration. Mr. Williamson is also concerned with the religious dilemma of our time and it is in his poetry of piety that he proclaims his validity as a true poet in the making.

Mr. Bergonzi is an accomplished poet within the very restricted limits of his personal landscape. He strives towards delicacy of texture and the tracery of a wayward æstheticism in his verse. It is not without significance that two of his poems are concerned with the paintings of Paul Klee.

Unfortunately for the poetry of Mr. Douglas Newton he has been to the cinema of Bogart and Bloody Butchery. Like certain film producers he believes in the virtues of shock treatment and to read his verse is to wonder whether Mr. Newton is a frustrated wide-boy who has lost his cosh. This is all most unfortunate, for his poem, *Saint Anthony's Harbour*, has passages of real beauty

and one can only hope that this pamphlet is nothing more than an error of premature publication.

Mr. Guido Morris is the editor of the *Crescendo Poetry Series* and as such is performing a valuable service to poetry. His own poetry maintains the standards he has set for the series and he is at his best in the shorter poems. These series of poetry in pamphlet form are an important feature of present publishing and they deserve every encouragement. Their editors, however, will not achieve the best results if they persist in publishing poetry when there is no poetry. Our national capacity for producing poets is enormous but not unlimited.

B. EVAN OWEN.

PAMPHLET POETS

- No. IV—*The Two Natures*, Robert Waller;
- No. V—*A Tetralogy*, Arthur Constance;
- No. VII—*The Outer Darkness*, Thomas Blackburn;
- No. IX—*Relations and Contraries*, Charles Tomlinson;
- No. X—*The Return*, John O'Hare;
- No. XI—*Escape from Anger*, Robert Manfred;
- No. II (1952)—*The Journey in Hope*, Thomas Fassam.
(Hand and Flower Press, 1s. each).

ROBERT WALLER has been available in small doses for some years and it is good to have this reasonable poem of his, 21 eleven-lined stanzas of some merit, seeming to derive somewhat from Fulke Greville and Donne, together with shorter pieces which convey a realistic approach to love, and a nonchalant approach to style which does not quite attain the debonair. His collected poems will be worth reading one day, rather for their clear content and apathy of expression than for originality of manner.

Arthur Constance annoys and pleases. He deals in suggestion rather than image; his free verse is often Georgian in feeling; he has a vivid sense and appreciation of colour (note the description of a stained glass window on p. 144); uses at times too many words (including *o'er* and *twixt*, which should not be used at all); is given a little to cataloguing: and reads like Whitman-and-milk.

Thomas Blackburn needs reading several times to distil his essence. He balances between objective and subjective image and

has a good pineal eye for both. The *Scenes from Childhood*, though carrying reminiscences of Auden and Eliot, are good, if wordy. The plain statements of *The End of an Age* are attractively made. The melodrama of *The Beast* does not convince. The total effect is of competence with perhaps too facile a method of expression.

Charles Tomlinson shows much technical ability in well-shaped verses, with clear images and a nice use of rhyme and assonance. *Peace Between us*, *William Blake* is an excellent commentary, *Courtesane* is accomplished, *Night Song* is, in its Joycean (*Chamber Music*) way, perfect. He is aware of his influences and uses them skilfully. Yet it is amusing to read something which seems to have come from Eliot by way of Hilaire Belloc.

John O'Hare likes to be the lilting Irishman, and bringing in humour, has no time for wit: managing to be debonair without nonchalance, full of blarney while keeping an eye on the main chance. His observation of small things (teacups and staircases, animals and lace, teeth, the snake, and Willie Jackson) is amazingly pointed. But there! read the man and be careful of his hypnotic rhythms.

Robert Manfred has read well in Yeats, Stephens, Auden, and the old poets, and speaks at times with a borrowed grace. Playing with up-to-date words like *paranoiac* and *metallurgic* does not disguise this: and he must be careful of overusing such words as *unseconded*, *unconcentrated*, *disintegrity*. His versification is competent and shapely, his thought clear, his images directly brought, his rhymes obvious, his fate unknown.

Thomas Fassam's work is gentle in tone, however strident an effect he occasionally strives after; sincere in emotion and words; but with not much feeling of necessity. The poem is "a pastoral in three parts" each of 16 eight-line stanzas of partly-blank partly-sprung verse, with good images, and no obscurities. An impression is left of his having made a gesture in the void like a solitary man swearing.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL.